



Leveraging Partnerships to Fund SNAP Outreach

Synopsis

The following paper outlines a strategy for States to fund SNAP outreach activities without using State funds by leveraging the resources of community organizations and for community organizations to obtain reimbursement for their SNAP outreach activities. This approach can help provide food to needy families, offer relief to overburdened social service offices, and stimulate the local economy.

Introduction

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and many non-profit organizations share the mission of promoting access to important programs, including SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), which addresses the food and nutrition needs of low-income Americans. Although many assistance programs such as SNAP have seen increased participation in recent years., there are still millions of individuals eligible but not participating in these programs, and billions of dollars in unclaimed benefits. Working together to leverage the outreach and individual assistance efforts of local non-profit organizations and of the SNAP outreach network yields benefits for low-income families, community organizations, the social service offices responsible for the administration of these programs, and the local and State economy.

Allowable Outreach Activities

General Outreach Activities	
Non-Profit Organization	State and Local Agencies
Media Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Mailers • Local PSAs • Church Bulletins • NGO Newsletters • Newspaper Advertisements • Articles & Op-Eds • Promotion at Community Events 	Media Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local PSAs • Posters/Signage at Service Centers & Retailers • Client Communication: Included in SNAP Notices Regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EBT Cards - Quarterly/Semi-Annual/Annual Reports - Recertification • Online Benefit Screening & Application Process • Readily Available Applications for Potential SNAP Clients • Referrals for Services Offered by Partner Non-Profits • Notify Clients/Non-Profits of Broad Based Categorical Eligibility
Individual Outreach Activities	
Non-Profit Organization	State and Local Agencies
Individual Assistance Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a Point of Contact for Clients • Promote SNAP Utilizing Brochures & Applications • Provide SNAP Screening & Application Assistance Using Online Benefit Tools 	Individual Assistance Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify Outreach Practices at Social Service Sites • Promote Services Offered by Non-Profits Utilizing Brochures, Applications, & Guidelines • Provide Orientation/Training to Non-Profit Outreach Staff • Provide Resources at Non-Profits for SNAP Eligibility Screening & Application Processing • Host Co-Sponsored Events at a Local SNAP Office or Retailer with Non-Profit Partners



Leveraging Partnerships to Fund SNAP Outreach — Continued

Funding

If community organizations choose to conduct SNAP outreach, screening, and application assistance, they can be reimbursed for these efforts with federal funds. Without any contribution of State funds, local non-profits can be reimbursed up to 50% of their expenses related to the provision of approved outreach activities. Staff time and expenditures on marketing efforts like media buys, printing materials, and postage costs are all allowable expenditures. In-kind contributions are not allowable.

How? A non-profit organization enters into an agreement with the State agency responsible for SNAP to provide SNAP outreach services. The State agency includes this agreement as part of its SNAP Outreach Plan submitted to FNS. If the State agency has no money to contribute, then the agreement between the State agency and the non-profit organization would be to reimburse the non-profit the Federal share (roughly 50%) of the cost of services rendered, less any administrative costs used by the State.

For example, if a non-profit had an agreement with its State department of social services and spent \$20,000 on its outreach efforts with half the time and resources spent on SNAP-related efforts, then the non-profit could invoice the State for \$10,000. If the State can contribute \$5,000 in State resources, then the coalition can be reimbursed the full \$10,000 with 50% coming from State funds and 50% from FNS. If the State is not able to contribute the \$5,000 and the non-profit spent non-Federal money to provide the services, then the State can still draw down the Federal share of \$5,000 and reimburse the non-profit for that amount. In this example, a non-profit organization which funds its outreach activities with non-Federal dollars spends half of its efforts on SNAP outreach activities and is able to grow its budget for these services by 25%.

Conclusion

These difficult economic times, characterized by high unemployment and increasing poverty, place a tremendous strain on State and local governments responsible for programs designed to provide assistance to those in need. Demand for services increases while state revenue decreases, and many States are struggling to avoid cutting administrative costs such as systems development and maintenance and staff resources. Funding sources available to community organizations, including donations, grants, and government contracts, are also shrinking. Now is the time to try this innovative approach which operates within current boundaries of law and regulation and requires little more than trust and commitment across the private and public sectors.

For more information regarding allowable activities and policy guidance, please refer to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's State Outreach Plan and Policy Guidance materials at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/guidance/stateplan.htm>; or for more information on leveraging partnerships to fund SNAP outreach, please contact partnerships@fns.usda.gov.

